

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 03678 060554Z

20

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

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R 060308Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1204

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3678

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJ: BANGKOK ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS REPORTS ON NORTHERN THAILAND

CHIANG MAI 115, DATED MARCH 5, 1974, BEING REPEATED TO

SECSTATE FOR INFO: QUOTE

R 050303Z MAR 74

FM AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

CMDR KO KHA AIR STATION

AMCONSUL UDORN

SONGKHLA

CO DET III

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHIANG MAI 115

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PASS USIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJ: BANGKOK ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS REPORTS ON NORTHERN THAILAND

1. WE HAVE RECENTLY REVIEWED REPORTING ON NORTH THAILAND
BY BANGKOK ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS AND HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY
ITS FREQUENT USELESSNESS AS A GUIDE TO WHAT IS HAPPENING

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 03678 060554Z

IN THE NORTH. NOT RPT NOT ONLY DO SOME STORIES INVOLVE

INACCURATE REPORTING OF THINGS THAT DID HAPPEN, BUT IN MANY CASES ACCURACY IS NOT EVEN AN ISSUE SINCE OTHER STORIES CONTAIN DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF THINGS THAT NEVER HAPPENED AT ALL. STORIES APPEAR GENERALLY TO FALL INTO ONE OF THREE CATEGORIES: 1) REPORTS ON MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRING INSIDE CHIANG MAI TOWN ITSELF, WHICH ARE SOMETIMES FAIRLY ACCURATE; 2) ISOLATED INCIDENTS CONTAINING AT BEST HALF OR QUARTER TRUTHS, SUCH AS "AMERICAN ADVISOR SHOT" (CHIANG MAI 83) AND, 3) REPORTS CONCERNING ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF MAJOR CITIES WHICH ARE ALMOST ALWAYS UNCONNECTED WITH REALITY -- I.E., MAJOR WAR BETWEEN KMT AND BPP, INVASION FROM LAOS, KMT TO INVADE TACHILEK, ETC.

2. AS A GENERAL RULE THEN, RECOMMEND MISSION SIMPLY IGNORE REPORTING IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS ABOUT EVENTS IN NORTH THAILAND, PARTICULARLY THOSE CONCERNING BORDER AREAS. WE DO NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE IT WORTHWHILE FOR US TO SPEND TIME DOING DETAILED EXEGESIS POINTING OUT ERRORS OR IRRELEVANCE OF THESE STORIES. HOWEVER, IN THOSE INSTANCES WHERE STORIES DO CAST ACCURATE LIGHT ON SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS, WE WILL COMMENT APPROPRIATELY. ALSO, WE WILL COMMENT IF STORY INVOLVES SIGNIFICANT DISTORTIONS CONCERNING AMERICANS OR US/THAI RELATIONS. MONTGOMERY UNQUOTE KINTNER

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